

Exhibit B



COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Brian J. Anderson, City Administrator
FROM: Andy Bohlen, Police Chief
DATE: October 10, 2013
SUBJECT: Information on Central Avenue Concerns

DISCUSSION:

I wanted you aware of the ongoing police efforts to work with the downtown community on Central Avenue to alleviate some of the fears and cultural clashes taking place. The vibrant business community is surrounded by a very large diverse population, often observed standing in groups and walking along Central Avenue. Some business owners have approached me at meetings or at various times throughout the past year telling me about people blocking the sidewalks, entrances to doorways, impeding business traffic, and even alleged criminal activity and open drug transactions. Initially, I pulled statistical information from 2009-2012 on the 000 block to 700 blocks on Central Avenue and gathered information on thefts, burglaries, fight and assault calls, parking complaints, and alleged drug activity. Of the calls monitored, most remained steady each year. Minor theft calls appear to have increased, while more significant thefts (burglaries) have decreased. Assaults and fights remained on average about 1 reported per month. Overall parking complaints increased in 2011-2012, but that was most likely due to the fact that we were without a CSO to better service the public parking areas. Drug activity in that area was only about 3-7 calls per year even though two separate businesses reportedly observed between 4 and 10 drug transactions each. They both indicated they were too busy to report the information to police. Since our conversations they have been encouraged to call police anytime they felt criminal activity was taking place in front of their businesses.

Because there was such a concern, I had instructed my supervisory staff to funnel any additional resources onto Central Avenue, whenever the shifts contained adequate staffing. I also have asked our investigative division to make a list with photographs on people we know to be involved in ongoing criminal activity in that area and to target those specific individuals with a "zero tolerance" approach. I can tell you that four suspects that were responsible for a large portion of the recent problem calls downtown are now either deceased or incarcerated for criminal activity.

We recently hired a part-time CSO that focuses his efforts on parking enforcement and can often be observed walking on Central Avenue during afternoon and evening hours. Our officers have been tasked to increase a marked patrol presence and we have conducted several undercover operations

on Central Avenue between the Community Center and the 400 block of Central Avenue. Several of these operations were overtime shifts specifically set up to target south Willow Street through the north section of Central Avenue. The department has also set up a liaison with another law enforcement entity and utilized undercover officers and covert efforts to conduct surveillance, monitor activity, and attempt to capture and record those suspected of criminal activity. The undercover efforts will continue as staffing allows but each time an operation has been scheduled, they have yielded few arrests but they have allowed increased gathering of criminal intelligence data and shown a marked decrease in pedestrian traffic in problem areas.

There has been increased discussion of a revised loitering ordinance and references to examples in other communities. I have discussed this with the city attorney and recognize that this may be problematic and unenforceable. Often times these ordinances require officers to establish that other criminal activity is taking place. For example, a group of people simply standing on the street corner isn't illegal if they aren't planning a crime. Officers must approach the group and ask them what they are doing. If they say they are simply talking to their friends and no other crime is observed, it will be difficult for a judge to find guilt after a summons is issued. If someone loitering is drunk, disorderly, damaging someone's vehicle, smoking illegal substances, or caught breaking into someone's car, or harassing pedestrian traffic, then we have a potential crime.

For months, we have been working with Minneapolis Police Department and finally have the date of October 24th on the calendar. On that date, the police department plans to utilize Officer Mohamed Abdullahi (the first MN Somali officer), Somali community leader Asher Ali, Sgt Al Shuda, myself, and a local videographer to shoot a scripted video downtown. The goal of this video will be to market it to the new Somali refugees coming into town and distribute the video across FCTV, through the community center, and other Somali sources within the city. The video will touch on the need for everyone to feel safe and welcome in Faribault, cultural assimilation, how to work with police, trust law enforcement, relay common laws and ordinances, express pride in the community, and provide encouragement to report criminal activity. I believe building trusting relationships with the diverse downtown culture is vital to improve police and community relations, cooperatively work towards common goals, establish enforceable laws, and make genuine progress. The Somali culture is here to stay and I have personally observed intolerance from every direction in this city and it is not solely a problem with one ethnic group. They are a vital part of the Faribault economy, rent apartments downtown, and communicate differently than the long time residents. The new residents do not have a Somali paper, Somali TV station, and large yards to gather in so they do what their culture has taught them. They talk and visit on the street. Like all cultural groups, it is a very small percentage of any group that causes the largest amount of criminal activity.

As staffing allows, we will continue to make Central Avenue a priority for increased patrol efforts, examine realistic ways to enforce laws already on the books, and build better relationships with our business partners and all residents.